



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/687,851	10/17/2003	Susan B. Cirulli	END920030048US1	9562

45092 7590 12/20/2010
HOFFMAN WARNICK LLC
75 STATE ST
14TH FLOOR
ALBANY, NY 12207

EXAMINER

POND, ROBERT M

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
----------	--------------

3625

NOTIFICATION DATE	DELIVERY MODE
-------------------	---------------

12/20/2010

ELECTRONIC

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Notice of the Office communication was sent electronically on above-indicated "Notification Date" to the following e-mail address(es):

PTOCommunications@hoffmanwarnick.com

Office Action Summary	Application No. 10/687,851	Applicant(s) CIRULLI ET AL.	
	Examiner Robert M. Pond	Art Unit 3625	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 19 November 2010.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-9 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-9 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Continued Examination Under 37 CFR 1.114

A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after final rejection.

Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114.

Applicant's submission filed on 19 November 2010 has been entered.

Response to Amendment

All pending claims 1-9 were examined in this non-final office action in response to the Request for Continued Examination. Claims 10-31 were previously canceled by Applicants.

Response to Arguments

Applicants' arguments, see Remarks, filed 22 October 2010 and Examiner Interview Summary entered 08 November 2010, with respect to the rejection(s) of claims 1-9 have been fully considered and are persuasive. Therefore, the rejection has been withdrawn. However, upon further consideration, new grounds of rejection citing Adams in view of Gune have been made as necessitated by amendment entered with the Request for Continued

Examination. Gune is withdrawn as the primary reference rendering arguments moot in view of the new grounds of rejection.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The text of those sections of Title 35, U.S. Code not included in this action can be found in a prior Office action.

- 1. Claims 1-3 and 5-9 are rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Adams (US 7,117,165) in view of Gune (Paper #20100718 mailed 22 July 2010, US 7,131,071 which incorporates by reference in its entirety US 2003/0204427 herein Gune '427, Paper #20100130).**

Adams teaches a system and methods of automating the entire acquisition cycle by incorporating all the functions that make up the purchasing process from request to payment. See at least col. 1, lines 39-62. Adams further teaches:

- Regarding claim 1. receiving an item request for an item from a requestor; wizard walks a requester through the process of submitting a purchase request comprising line items to the system. See at least col. 3, line 24-col. 4, line 30; col. 7, line 18-col. 8, line 50.
- Regarding claim 1. dynamically generating an approval list for the item request based on application of a set of rules to the item, the approval list being a hierarchy of approvers from which approval must be obtained; modification of any purchase requisition field by an approver results in the

system recalculating (note: dynamic) the required approvals and invalidates any existing approvals for that line item or for the entire requisition. Modifying any field may trigger the addition of new approvers into the approval chain. See at least col. 11, lines 55-62. entering ad-hoc items not on the approved list of items will trigger new approval rules (e.g. adding purchasing department to the approval list). See at least col. 3, lines 46-56. determines the approval path for the requisition using the approval rules defined in the business rules for the company. See at least col. 10, lines 50--54. When a request is submitted, the system checks the approval rules of the company, decides which users need to approve the request (note: automatic determination of approvers) and in what order (note: chain of command) and then notifies the first approver that there is a requisition waiting for attention. Each approver sees new requisitions in a folder of incoming requisitions and will need to take action to move it to a different folder. See at least col. 5, line 59-col. 6, line 11; col. 10, lines 60-67. high level approver/ low level approver (note: hierarchy of approvers). See at least col. 12, lines 11-16. More on rules. See at least col. 16, line 56-col. 17, line 14.

- Regarding claim 1. automatically determining an approver and any subsequent approver from the hierarchy based on an item in an item request, the subsequent approver being someone from whom approval must be obtained subsequent to approval being obtained from the

approver; When a request is submitted, the system checks the approval rules of the company, decides which users need to approve the request and in what order (note: chain of command) and then notifies the first approver that there is a requisition waiting for attention. Each approver sees new requisitions in a folder of incoming requisitions and will need to take action to move it to a different folder. See at least col. 10, lines 60-67. high level approver/ low level approver (note: hierarchy of approvers). See at least col. 12, lines 11-16. Next approver in the approval chain. See at least col. 11, lines 28-34. chain of command. See at least col. 12, lines 5-10. Note: approvers based on the line item. See at least col. 6, lines 5-7; col. 9, lines 17-21; col. 11, lines 55-62.

- Regarding claim 1. logging the approver into an application used to make item requests; all users of the system must be logged in and be authenticated. See at least col. 18, lines 1-4; col. 22, lines 62-67. When a request is submitted, the system checks the approval rules of the company, decides which users need to approve the request and in what order (note: chain of command) and then notifies the first approver that there is a requisition waiting for attention. Email notification message includes a URL hyperlink that points the approver directly to the system's Organizer software via a browser to display the requisitions waiting for this person's approval. See at least col. 4, lines 18-28.

- Regarding claim 1. displaying by the application a view containing a set of item requests to the approver containing all item requests from all requestors for which approval is requested from the approver, the set of item requests including a plurality of item requests from a plurality of requesters; When an approver goes to the Organizer Interface be it from a notification message, bookmark or some other hyperlink, the Organizer displays the incoming requisitions for that approver showing the information in Table 3 for each requisition. See at least col. 11, lines 1-6; Table 3).
- Regarding claim 1. Adams teaches all the above as noted under the 103(a) rejection and teaches line item purchase approval and denial using an approver interface that facilitates purchase request processing along an approval chain of approvers. Gune '427 teaches a user interface for processing requests for approval. Gune '427 provides a software facility for processing approval requests ("the facility") that presents a single user interface, sometimes called an "approvals inbox," for reviewing and acting on approval requests (hereafter simply "requests") generated by a variety of different applications. For example, where requests to approve time sheets are generated using a time sheet application and requests to approve purchase orders are generated using a purchase order application, the facility presents a single user interface for reviewing and acting on both time sheet requests and purchase order requests. See at

Art Unit: 3625

least abstract; Figs. 1-4; 0002-0018. Gune teaches generating a chain of subsequent approvers. See at least Table 1 and supporting figures. Gune on the other teaches batch approval/rejection (note: simultaneously approves all line items of a purchase request) not mentioned by Adams and line item approval/rejection as mentioned by Adams. Gune '427: See at least Fig. 8 (850, 860); Fig. 10 (1060); 0076; 0078; Fig. 9 (920, 940); 0077; Fig. 11 (1120, 1140); 0079. One of ordinary skill in the art at time the invention was made would have recognized that applying the known techniques of Gune's batch processing would result in faster processing by the approver and would have yielded predictable results and resulted in an improved system. It would have been recognized that applying the techniques of Gune to the teachings of Adams would have added batch processing that would result in faster processing by the approver. It would have been recognized that applying the techniques of Gune to the teaching of Adams would have resulted in receiving an approval determination for at least one of the set of item requests from the approver, wherein the receiving is adapted to receive a plurality of approval determinations from the approver simultaneously and would have yielded predictable results because the level of ordinary skill in the art demonstrated by the references applied shows the ability to incorporate such data processing features into similar systems.

Obviousness under 35 USC 103 in view of the Supreme Court decision
KSR International Co. vs. Teleflex Inc.

Adams and Gune further teach and suggest:

- Regarding claim 1. updating an approver list corresponding to the at least one of the set of item requests based on the approval determination; modification of any purchase requisition field by an approver results in the system recalculating the required approvals and invalidates any existing approvals for that line item or for the entire requisition. Modifying any field may trigger the addition of new approvers into the approval chain. Adams: See at least col. 11, lines 55-62. entering ad-hoc items not on the approved list of items will trigger new approval rules (e.g. adding purchasing department to the approval list). Adams: See at least col. 3, lines 46-56.
- Regarding claim 1. and in case that the hierarchy contains any subsequent approver and the approval determination by the approver is that of the at least one of the set of item requests being approved, automatically forwarding an approval message to the subsequent approver in the approver list after the updating step. First approver is automatically notified in the order required. Adams: See at least col. 4, lines 18-48; An approval will trigger any notifications specified in the business rules for the company, mark the request as approved for this approver, and add the request to the incoming folder for the next

approver in the approval chain (i.e. subsequent approver notified by notification system previously cited). Adams: See at least col. 11, lines 27-34.

- Regarding claim 2. Adams: See at least col. 4, lines 5-11; col. 10, lines 1-21; col. 11, lines 47-col. 12, line 3. Gune '427: See at least Fig. 13; 0081.
- Regarding claim 3. Adams: See at least col. 4, lines 18-30; col. 18, lines 24-67; Table 10. Gune '427: See at least 0083.
- Regarding claim 5. Adams: See at least col. 6, lines 4-30; col. 6, lines 56-59; col. 12, lines 5-10; Table 9; col. 18, lines 1-4. Gune '427: See at least Fig. 4 (Core Services/Authentication & Access Control); 0059.
- Regarding claim 6. Adams: See at least col. 18, lines 24-67; Table 10. Gune '427: See at least Fig. 5 (Received); Fig. 7 (Received (pending), Approved, Rejected); Fig. 8 (880); Fig. 10 (1080).
- Regarding claim 7. Adams: See at least Table 7 (#2 (approved), #3 (pending); #9 (denied)); Table 10 (#2 (approved or denied), #8 (pending)); col. 11, line 1-col. 12, lines 47. Gune '427: See at least Fig. 5 (Received); Fig. 7 (Received (pending), Approved, Rejected); Fig. 8 (880); Fig. 10 (1080).
- Regarding claim 8. Adams: See at least Table 7 (#2 (approved), #9 (denied)); Table 10 (#2 (approved or denied)); col. 11, line 1-col. 12,

lines 47. Gune '427: See at least Fig. 5 (Received); Fig. 7 (Received (pending), Approved, Rejected); Fig. 8 (880); Fig. 10 (1080).

- Regarding claim 9. Adams: See at least Standard Reports for all employees Table 7 (#3 (requisitions still to be approved, by whom), #5 (line item by approver). Gune '427: See at least Fig. 13; 0003; 0019; 0072; 0081.
- Claims 10-31. Canceled.

2. Claim 4 is rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Adams (US 7,117,165) and Gune (Paper #20100718 mailed 22 July 2010, US 7,131,071 which incorporates by reference in its entirety US 2003/0204427 herein Gune '427, Paper #20100130) as applied to claim 1.

Adams and Gune teach and suggest all the above as noted under the 103(a) rejection and teach and suggest: i) integrating legacy systems (e.g. ERPs, HRMSs, E-mail systems) external to the system's server using adapters (see at least col. 2, line 64-col. 3, line 3), ii) notifying a user with an informational message using electronic mail that keeps all interested parties informed about what is going on with a particular requisition and iii) including a URL in the notification message that points the notified user to the system's Organizer software via the user's browser (as noted above). Adams and Gune further teach requiring users to log-in and be authenticated in order to use the system which features the Organizer software interface. It would have been obvious to one of

ordinary skill in the art at time of invention to require a user not currently logged in and authenticated who is using a legacy system (e.g. legacy E-mail) and being pointed to the system's Organizer interface software would be required to log-in and be authenticated in order to use the system's Organizer software.

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Robert M. Pond whose telephone number is 571-272-6760. The examiner can normally be reached on 8:30AM-5:30PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Mr. Jeff Smith can be reached on 571-272-6763. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service

Art Unit: 3625

Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/Robert M. Pond/
Primary Examiner, Art Unit 3625
December 14, 2010